

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 NRC-05 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07

IO-10 L-02 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 SAJ-01

SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-05

BIB-01 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FAA-00 MC-02

ERDE-00 AID-05 /113 W

----- 121401

O R 220853Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9772

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

RUMJDHBPAMCONSUL HONG KONG 1028

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3549

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN, MCAP

SUBJECT: GOP FEARS IMPENDING INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION MAY
DELAY NORMALIZATION PROCESS

REF: ISLAMABAD 3504 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PAKS, DISTURBED BY INFORMATION THEY CLAIM TO
HAVE ABOUT IMPENDING SECOND INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION,
ARE HOLDING BACK REPLY TO INDIAN PROPOSAL THAT CIVIL
AIR TALKS BE HELD NEXT MONTH. THEY FEAR THAT IN WAKE
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BLAST THEIR PUBLIC OPINIONHKIGX REGARD ANY CONCESSIONS

THEY MAKE AS RESULT OF EXPLOSION-INSPIRED FEAR. THEY ARE PRESSING US FOR OUR ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN EXPLOSION PROSPECTS. WE CONTINUE TO THINK THAT IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO SHARE SUCH ASSESSMENT WITH PAKS BUT DEPARTMENT (AND NEW DELHI) MAY BE AWARE OF FACTORS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION UNDER THESE DISTURBING CIRCUMSTANCES. END SUMMARY.

1. DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI CALLED IN POLITICAL COUNSELOR AT SHORT NOTICE THIS MORNING TO RAISE ISSUE OF POTENTIAL IMPACT THAT SECOND IMYKAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION COULD HAVE ON PROJECTED CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS AND, IN THIS CONTEXT, TO REQUEST ON MORE URGENT BASIS THAN HE HAD ON APRIL 19 (REFTEL ANY INFORMATION USG COULD PROVIDE ON POSSIBILITY OF BLAST IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

2. MEHDI STATED THAT GOP HAD "GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE" THAT INDIANS INTENDED TO STAGE SECOND EXPLOSION SOME TIME BEFORE APRIL 26. POSSIBILITY OF EXPLOSION HAPPENING THIS QUICKLY HAD ALREADY LED MFA TO RECONSIDER ADVISABILITY OF PROCEEDING WITH SIMLA PROCESS CIVIL AIR TALKS WHICH INDIANS HAVE PROPOSED BEGIN IN NEW DELHI MAY 12. MINISTRY FEARS THAT IF TALKS ARE HELD IN WAKE OF SECOND EXPLOSION ANY CONCESSIONS GOP MAKES TO BREAK DEADLOCK WHICH DEVELOPED IN FIRST ROUND LAST NOVEMBER (SUCH AS ISSUE OF ICAO JURISDICTION) WOULD BE REGARDED BY IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF PAK OPINION AS HAVING BEEN AGREED TO OUT OF FEAR OF NUCLEAR INDIA WHATEVER THEIR REAL BASIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND HOWEVER MANY CONCESSIONS THE GOI MIGHT OFFER. PRESENT THINKING AT MFA IS TO WITHHOLD ANY REPLY TO INDIAN PROPOSAL UNTIL SITUATION BECOMES MORE CLEAR. OTHER OPTION, TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL AND LATER TO POSTPONE TALKS SHOULD BLAST OCCUR, WOULD IN MEHDI'S VIEW HAVE EVEN MORE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR NORMALIZATION PROCESS.

3. MEHDI ALSO STATED THAT PAKS ARE CONSIDERING
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ISSUING STATEMENT SHORTLY IN ADVANCE OF POSSIBLE INDIAN EXPLOSION. HE SAID THEY WILL IN ANY EVENT CERTAINLY ISSUE ONE AFTER IT.

4. MEHDI DECLARED THAT MFA GREATLY REGRETTED THESE DEVELOPMENTS. HE REITERATED THE PAK COMMITMENT TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND RECALLED THE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE THE GOP ATTACHES TO THE SUCCESS OF

THE CIVIL AIR TALKS, THE FIRST IMPORTANT SIMLA PROCESS NEGOTIATIONS AFTER THE KASHMIR DEVELOPMENTS OF FEBRUARY AND THE LIFTING OF THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO AT THAT TIME. HE SAID THAT NONETHELESS THE GOP HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF PUBLIC OPINION. HE RECALLED THAT THIS HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE GOP'S DECISION, FOLLOWING THE FIRST INDIAN EXPLOSION, TO CALL OFF THE NORMALIZATION TALKS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN LAST JUNE 10. (THESE WERE NOT RESCHEDULED UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER.)

5. MEHDI SAID HE HAD NOT APPROACHED OTHER MISSIONS HERE FOR THEIR GOVERNMENTS' ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR SECOND EXPLOSION. HE SAID THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO PASS ON ANY INFORMATION AND THE CHINESE, WHO WOULD, WOULD NOT HAVE ANY. HE WAS CONSIDERING TALKING WITH THE BRITS. HE SAID THAT IF THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE U.S. PASSED ON PROVED TO BE INACCURATE THE PAKS WOULD, OF COURSE, UNDERSTAND THAT ANY SUCH ESTIMATE CAN BE WRONG.

6. COMMENT: MEHDI'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY MADE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF SENIOR MFA LEVELS. (HE QUOTED FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI AS SAYING THAT THE AMERICANS WERE LIKELY TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON.) WHILE WE COME TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO SHARE OUR ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR A SECOND INDIAN EXPLOSION WITH THE PAKS, DEPARTMENT (AND NEW DELHI) MAY BE AWARE OF FACTORS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION UNDER THE DISTURBING CIRCUMSTANCES MEHDI HAS OUTLINED. WE WOULD IN ANY EVENT STILL APPRECIATE ANY EXEGESIS OF SETHNA STATEMENT
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(MEHDI SAYS THIS WAS BASIS OF BHUTTO COMMENT THAT INDIAN EXPLOSION COMING SOON) WHICH ACTION ADDRESSEES CAN PROVIDE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ISLAMA03549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750140-1037
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750429/aaaabbcn.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ISLAMABAD 3504
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <18 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOP FEARS IMPENDING INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION MAY DELAY NORMALIZATION PROCESS
TAGS: PFOR, MCAP, PK, IN
To: STATE NEW DELHI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006